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Summary of Testimony  
Senate Veterans' and Emergency Preparedness Committee  
Hearing on HB-1, Veterans Holiday  
7 February 2013

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Robert Thornhill. I live in Beaverton. I appear before you in support of HB-1. In doing so, I represent members of District 3 Oregon Veterans of Foreign Wars, and its five Portland VFW Posts. I have submitted written testimony. With your permission I'd like read a summary of that testimony.

Since shortly after the fighting of the First World War ended at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day, of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of 1918, America has set aside a day each year to honor the men and women who served in uniform for the nation's common good. The first such day, Armistice Day, 11 November 1919 honored the veterans of WWI.

In June 1954, following WWII, the bloodiest war of all time, followed then by Korea, Armistice Day became Veterans Day, a national and state holiday on which communities across this land celebrate and honor veterans of all wars for their sacrifices and achievements for the common good.

Veterans Day is a paid holiday for the over 2 million federal employees of whom 26.3% or 542,641, as of last available report, are veterans. Veterans Day is also a paid holiday for Oregon state employees. While we know the number of veterans employed by the federal government, as far as I know there is no available report of how many veterans are employed by the State of Oregon.

All Americans have benefitted from the sacrifices and military service of veterans. Therefore, we believe it is not asking too much to ask that the private sector employers who can afford it to voluntarily join government in giving their veteran employees a day off on Veterans Day.

One reservation on District 3's support of HB-1: While in our view the requirements of HB-1 have been masterfully drafted to be, in essence, voluntary on both employer and veteran employee, if in the course of these hearings strong evidence appears which indicates HB-1 would inhibit employers from employing veterans, we would counsel withdrawing or amending HB-1 until that inhibition is overcome. To us in District 3, the dignity and the self-confidence of a good civilian job for the veteran coming home from war is a higher priority.

I have been asked, in concluding, to acknowledge that we appreciate that it is the private sector employers and employees who create the wealth that pays the bills for our wars

and for the many benefits provided veterans, to include whatever HB-1 may cost. Without the private sector it wouldn't be possible.

Senator Courtney, on behalf of my VFW comrades, thank you for sponsoring HB-1; Committee, thank you for holding this hearing and hearing me out; and all you, on behalf of my Veterans of Foreign Wars comrades, thank you for what you do here in Salem.

I'd be pleased to try to answer any questions you may have.